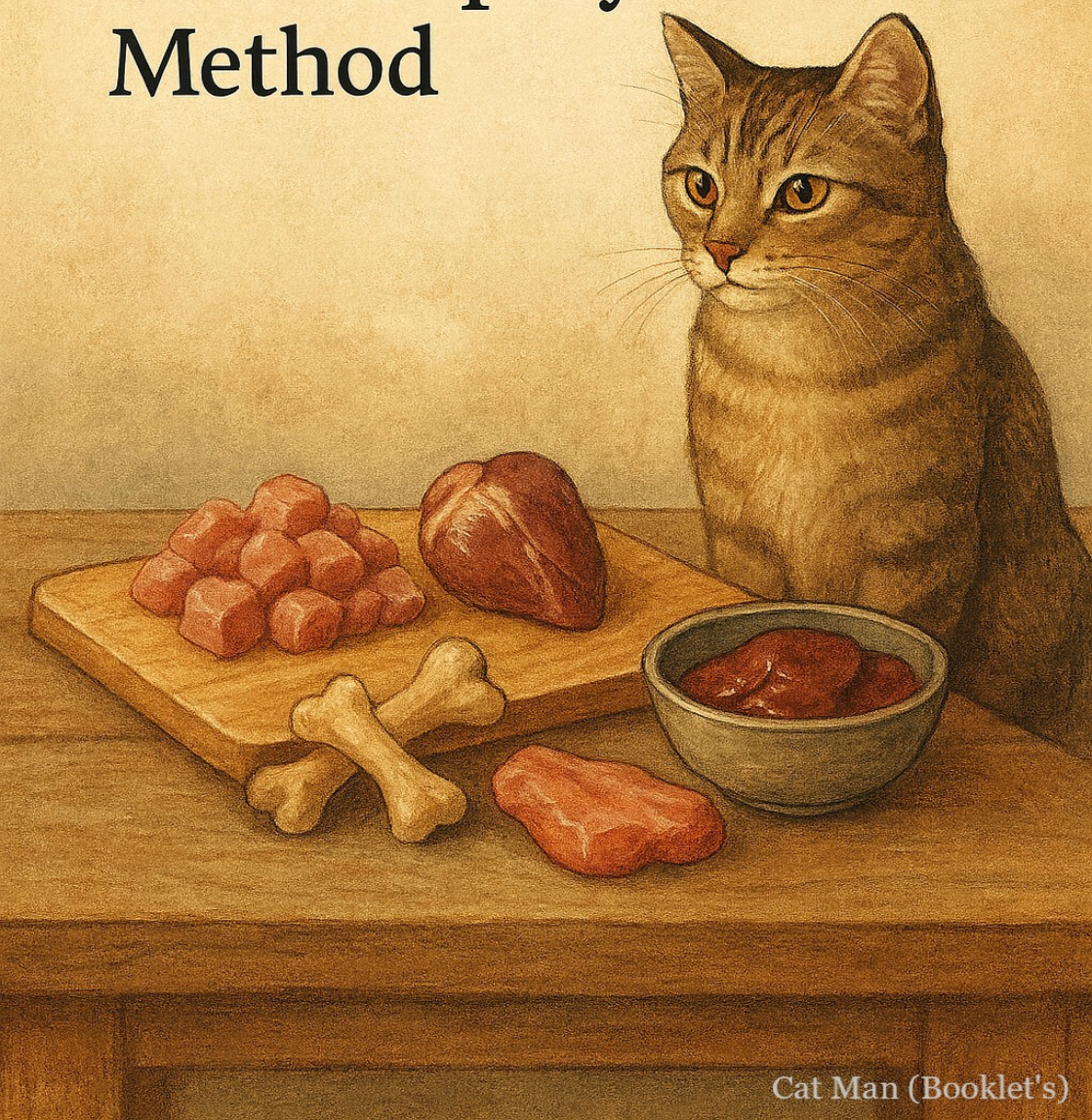
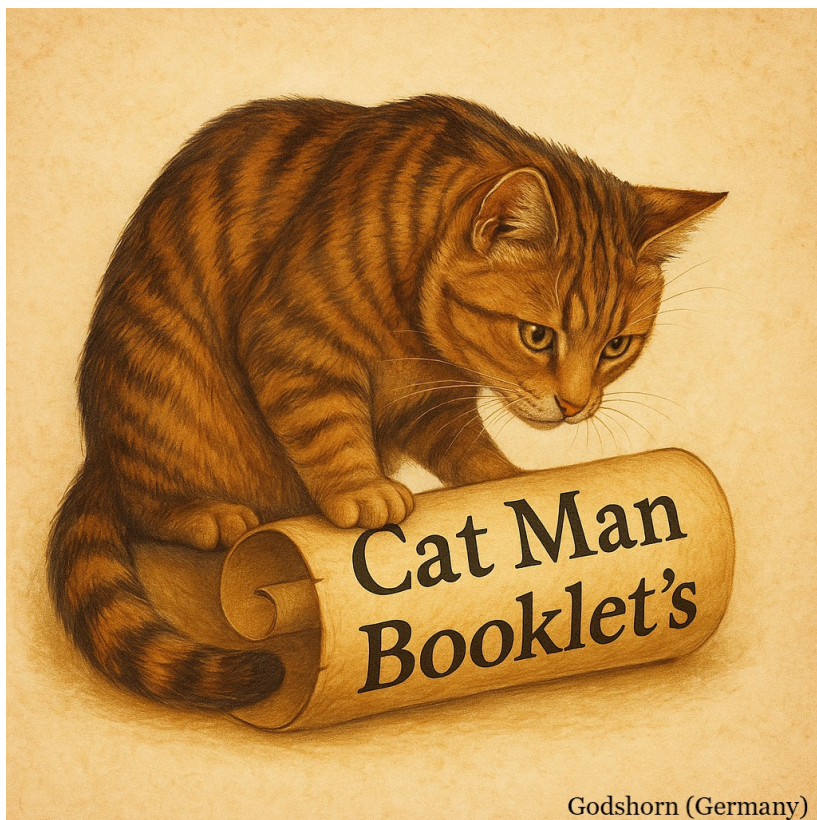


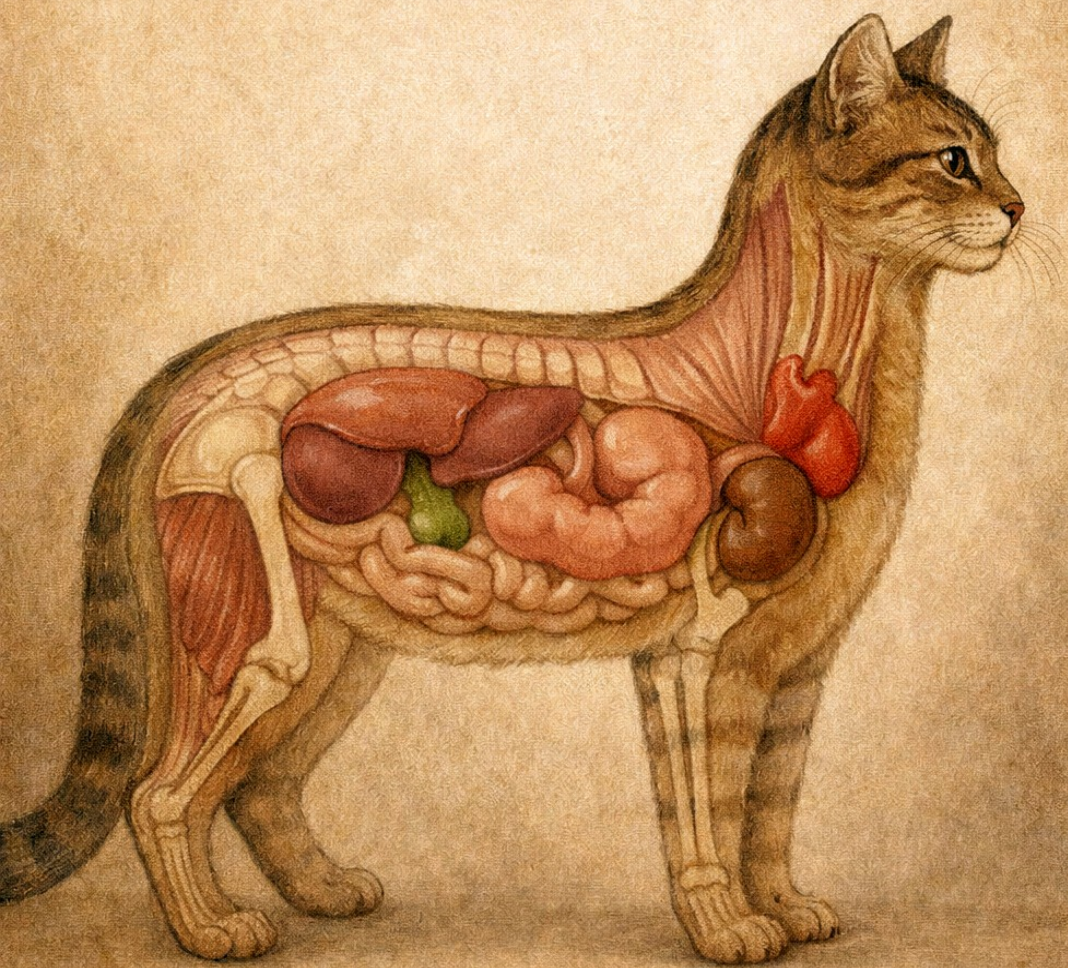
B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey Method



B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey Method



Godshorn (Germany)



Introduction

Alternative feeding methods for domestic cats have gained importance in recent years. Among them are raw food diets such as B.A.R.F. (Biologically Appropriate Raw Food) and the Frankenprey method (the whole-prey or prey-model principle). Both approaches are used by cat owners who seek natural and species-appropriate forms of nutrition.

Their growing popularity has created a strong demand for detailed and easily understandable information about these methods. Today, B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey method are among the best-known forms of raw feeding.

Raw feeding is based on the natural diet of wild felines. At the same time, however, it is a complex feeding practice in which mistakes in formulation can quickly lead to under- or oversupply of nutrients. For every raw-feeding method, it is therefore essential that the nutritional needs of the cat are correctly taken into account.

This applies especially to taurine, vitamin A, vitamin D, arachidonic acid, and the calcium-to-phosphorus ratio. Hygiene is also highly important, because raw meat is more likely than cooked food products to carry bacterial contamination. Selecting appropriate ingredients, storing them correctly, and preparing them safely are therefore central aspects of raw feeding.

Any uncertainties or health concerns should always be evaluated by a veterinarian.

Both methods—B.A.R.F. and Frankenprey—aim to replicate a cat's natural prey but differ significantly in structure. B.A.R.F. allows for a wider variety of components and the use of supplements.

The Frankenprey method, by contrast, follows strict proportions of muscle meat, bone, and organs and largely avoids plant ingredients as well as synthetic additives. Both systems have advantages and drawbacks that must be considered carefully.

Any uncertainty in feeding or in a cat's health status should always be discussed with a veterinarian.



Foundations of B.A.R.F. (Biologically Appropriate Raw Food)

The abbreviation B.A.R.F. stands for “Bones and Raw Food” or “Biologically Appropriate Raw Food.” The underlying philosophy is based on the idea of feeding dogs and cats a type of nutrition to which they have adapted over the course of evolution. The goal is a diet that is as species-appropriate as possible and modeled after the composition of natural prey.

This approach is centered around raw, whole, and unprocessed foods. Grains, fillers, and artificial additives are largely avoided. A core principle of the concept is providing high-quality protein and a high moisture content, similar to what is present in natural prey.

A typical B.A.R.F. diet for cats consists of various components fed in raw form. Muscle meat forms the foundation and provides protein, fats, vitamins, and minerals. A diverse selection of animal protein sources is recommended to ensure broad nutrient coverage.

Raw, meaty bones supply calcium, phosphorus, and additional minerals. They may also support dental health. Examples include chicken necks and chicken wings. Organs such as liver, kidneys, heart, spleen, and lungs are also essential components.

The liver is a primary source of vitamin A and copper. Heart is notably high in taurine, which is essential for cats.

Vegetables and fruits may be included in small amounts, primarily to provide fiber and certain vitamins. Cats, however, have a low requirement for carbohydrates.

Supplements can be part of a B.A.R.F. feeding plan. These may include oils such as fish oil, which supplies omega-3 fatty acids, and taurine, which must be added particularly when not enough heart is fed. Vitamins such as vitamin E or the B-complex, as well as certain minerals, may also be necessary. The possibility of supplementation represents a major distinction between the B.A.R.F. method and the Frankenprey method, which generally avoids additives.

For a balanced diet, it is essential that all components are provided in the correct proportions. Mistakes in selecting or assembling ingredients may result in nutrient deficiencies or oversupply. Using bones correctly or providing appropriate calcium sources is crucial for achieving the necessary calcium-to-phosphorus ratio.

Taurine levels can also vary widely depending on the type of meat used and its freshness. Therefore, assembling a B.A.R.F. ration requires careful planning.

If uncertainties arise, a veterinarian should be consulted—especially if a cat has health issues or specific needs.



The Frankenprey Method (Whole-Prey Principle)

The Frankenprey method, also known as the Prey Model Raw (PMR) or Whole Prey Model, is a form of raw feeding that aims to replicate a cat's natural prey as precisely as possible. Instead of feeding whole prey animals, meat, organs, and bones are combined in specific ratios. The goal is to create a composition that mirrors the nutrient structure of small prey animals such as rodents or birds.

The name “Frankenprey” refers to the idea of assembling a complete prey animal from different parts.

The method follows clearly defined ratios that should be achieved over a given period of time. Typically, a ratio of 80/10/10 or 80–84/6/5/5 is recommended. Around 80–84 percent consists of muscle meat. Between 6 and 10 percent is made up of raw, edible bone. Five percent is liver, and another five percent consists of other secreting organs such as kidneys, spleen, or pancreas.

These fixed ratios represent a key difference from the B.A.R.F. method, which is structured more flexibly.

The basis for these ratios lies in the average composition of small prey animals. Muscle meat provides protein, amino acids, and water-soluble vitamins.

Raw bones supply calcium and phosphorus in a natural balance. The liver provides fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamin A, as well as certain water-soluble vitamins. Other secreting organs contribute additional essential nutrients. By imitating this natural distribution, an overall balanced nutrient profile can be achieved without using synthetic supplements.

Another important principle of the Frankenprey method is variety. It is recommended to use different animal protein sources over longer periods of time. These may include chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, rabbit, or game. Variation in the types of organ meats is equally important. A broad spectrum of proteins helps ensure that the cat is provided with all essential nutrients over time. Taurine-rich parts such as heart, dark poultry meat, or liver play a special role.

Plant ingredients or synthetic supplements are generally not used in Frankenprey. However, some proponents add fish oil to provide omega-3 fatty acids. Feeding is typically done in larger pieces to promote natural tearing and chewing, which supports dental health. Cutting meat and bone pieces to appropriate sizes is therefore a typical practical requirement of this method.

Strict adherence to the ratios and the absence of supplements require precise planning. Mistakes in the composition may lead to nutrient imbalances—particularly regarding the proportion of muscle meat to organs or the amount of bone.

Fat content also plays a role: very lean meat may require an additional animal fat source to meet the cat's energy needs. As with any form of raw feeding, a veterinarian should be consulted if uncertainties arise, especially when there are health concerns or the cat has special dietary requirements.



Hygiene ist das A und O bei der Rohfütterung

Nutritional Requirements of Domestic Cats and Raw Feeding

Domestic cats are obligate carnivores and have specific nutritional needs that must be met to support their health and longevity. They require a protein-rich diet, as they use protein—unlike many other species—as their primary energy source. Certain amino acids and fatty acids cannot be synthesized in sufficient quantities by the cat and must therefore be supplied through animal-based components of the diet. These include taurine, arachidonic acid, vitamin A, vitamin D, and various B vitamins.

Taurine is an essential amino acid found primarily in animal tissues. It is necessary for heart function, vision, and reproduction. Cats can produce only very small amounts of taurine on their own and therefore depend on an adequate dietary supply. Raw meat—especially heart and dark poultry meat—is a natural source of taurine.

Arachidonic acid is an essential fatty acid found exclusively in animal fats and required for various metabolic processes. Cats also need preformed vitamin A from animal sources, as they cannot convert beta-carotene from plants into usable vitamin A.

Vitamin D is likewise obtained predominantly from animal foods, as cats do not synthesize sufficient amounts on their own. Niacin (vitamin B3) is another example of a nutrient for which cats have a high requirement and can synthesize only limited amounts.

Vitamin B12 (cobalamin), found mainly in animal proteins, plays a key role in energy metabolism.

The ratio of calcium to phosphorus is particularly important, as it is essential for bone metabolism and other bodily functions. Meat contains a high amount of phosphorus but very little calcium. Therefore, an appropriate calcium source must be provided—such as raw bones or a suitable supplement. The ideal ratio is approximately 1.1:1 to 1.5:1. A diet too high in phosphorus over time can lead to health problems.

Essential fatty acids are also important, especially omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. Arachidonic acid from animal sources is indispensable for cats. Omega-3 fatty acids such as EPA and DHA, found in fish oil, can provide additional benefits for skin, coat, and anti-inflammatory processes.

Both B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey method attempt to meet these specific requirements by using raw meat as the primary source of protein and other nutrients. Both methods rely on the inclusion of organs to ensure adequate intake of vitamins and minerals.

The use of bones is central in both systems to balance the calcium-phosphorus ratio. B.A.R.F. allows the use of supplemental nutrients to fill potential gaps, whereas the Frankenprey method aims to achieve a balanced profile solely through correct proportions of animal components and largely avoids synthetic additives.

Some adherents of Frankenprey, however, add fish oil to ensure sufficient omega-3 intake.

Because nutrient levels in meat can vary widely depending on species, diet, and processing, careful planning is essential. Any uncertainty about adequate nutrient supply—especially regarding taurine, vitamin D, or calcium—should be discussed with a veterinarian.



Fleisch mit hohem Taurinanteil

Practical Implementation of B.A.R.F. Feeding for Cats

Transitioning a cat to a B.A.R.F. diet should always be done gradually to avoid digestive problems. A slow adjustment over several weeks is advisable. A common approach is to mix a small portion of the raw food with the cat's current diet and gradually increase the raw portion.

Alternatively, the raw food can be offered in a separate bowl. For picky eaters, different textures, lightly warming the food, or palatable toppings may help. Throughout the transition phase, it is important to observe the cat's stool to identify any potential intolerances early. If persistent issues occur, the diet should be reviewed by a veterinarian.

Formulating a balanced B.A.R.F. ration depends on the individual needs of the cat. A frequently cited guideline is approximately 2 to 3 percent of the cat's body weight per day, adjusted for age, activity level, and health status. Kittens have a higher requirement due to their growth. A typical composition includes 80 to 95 percent animal-based components such as muscle meat, organs, bones, and fat.

Additionally, 5 to 20 percent fruits or vegetables may be included, though these components are optional. Some sources recommend dividing the diet into 70 percent muscle meat, 10 percent bones, 10 percent organs, and 10 percent fruits, vegetables, or dairy products. A wide variety of meats and organ types helps support broad nutrient coverage.

The calcium-to-phosphorus ratio must be balanced, which requires bones or suitable calcium sources. Taurine-rich foods or taurine supplements should also be considered. Essential fatty acids can be added through appropriate oils.

Risks of B.A.R.F. feeding arise primarily when the diet is not formulated correctly. Mistakes in nutrient distribution can lead to deficiencies or oversupply. Raw meat can carry bacteria such as Salmonella, Listeria, E. coli, Campylobacter, or Clostridium. These pathogens can pose risks to both cats and humans. The danger of internal injury from bones is greatest with cooked bones, which splinter easily. Raw bones are considered safer but still carry some risk. Raw meat may also contain parasites such as *Toxoplasma gondii*, which can be reduced through freezing. A diet heavily based on raw fish may lead to thiamine deficiency, because raw fish contains thiaminase.

If ongoing abnormalities or health issues arise, a veterinarian should always be consulted.



Calcium zu Phosphor zwischen 1,2:1 bis 1,5:1

Practical Application of the Frankenprey Method

The practical implementation of the Frankenprey method involves replicating the composition of small prey animals—such as mice, birds, or rabbits—as closely as possible. Suitable components include various types of muscle meat such as chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, rabbit, or game. Hearts and stomachs are also considered part of the muscle-meat portion. Raw, meaty bones such as chicken necks, wings, or backs, as well as rabbit ribs, serve as calcium sources.

Liver is fed as a distinct component, supplemented with other secreting organs such as kidneys, spleen, or pancreas. Whole prey items—such as day-old chicks, mice, quail, or small fish—may also be included. The size of prey or prey parts should be appropriate for the cat to ensure safe consumption.

Nutrient supply is ensured by achieving the ratio of 80–84 percent muscle meat, 6–10 percent bone, 5 percent liver, and 5 percent other secreting organs over a certain period of time. This ratio does not need to be met in every single meal. It can be balanced over several days or over the course of a week. A wide variety of animal protein sources is important to maintain a broad range of nutrients. It is recommended to use at least three to four different types of meat.

Rotating different types of organ meats from various species also contributes to a comprehensive nutrient supply.

Taurine-rich meats such as heart, dark poultry meat, or liver should be included regularly. Because very lean meat may not always provide enough energy, an additional animal fat source may be needed in some cases.

Feeding is typically done in chunks, which supports natural chewing behavior and contributes to dental health. Preparation includes cutting meat and bone pieces into appropriate sizes. Freezing the components for several days can help reduce certain parasites. Some owners also use small amounts of animal-based fiber, such as fur, to approximate a more complete prey structure.

Individual preferences and a cat's tolerance should be considered. If health problems or abnormalities arise, the feeding approach should be reviewed by a veterinarian.



B.A.R.F.



Frankenprey

Comparison and Contrast of B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey Method

B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey method are two forms of raw feeding that both draw on the concept of a biologically appropriate diet. Both systems focus on raw animal components such as muscle meat, bones, and organs. The goal of both approaches is to mimic the natural diet of cats as closely as possible.

Both methods may offer benefits such as improved digestion and good dental health, but they also carry risks—particularly when rations are not formulated correctly. These risks include bacterial contamination, an unbalanced nutrient profile, or insufficient intake of essential nutrients. If uncertainties arise, feeding practices should be reviewed by a veterinarian.

A key difference lies in the use of plant ingredients and supplements. B.A.R.F. allows the inclusion of vegetables, fruits, and synthetic supplements. This provides flexibility in adjusting the diet but requires a strong understanding of nutrients and their functions.

The Frankenprey method largely excludes plant ingredients and synthetic additives. It focuses on replicating a whole prey animal through specific proportions of meat, bone, and organs. This approach follows a fixed structure and offers less room for individual adjustments.

Another difference is found in the feeding forms themselves. The Frankenprey method often uses larger pieces of meat and bone, which promotes chewing and may support dental health. B.A.R.F. can also be fed in chunks, but often includes ground components, which some cats find easier to eat.

The flexibility of B.A.R.F. makes it more accessible for some owners, while Frankenprey may require a steeper learning curve due to the strict adherence to ratios. For cats that react sensitively to certain ingredients or have special dietary needs, B.A.R.F. offers more options for adjustments through supplementation.

The advantages and disadvantages of both methods can be described as follows:

B.A.R.F. is considered flexible because it uses a variety of components and allows supplements. This can make it easier to adapt to individual needs, but requires expertise to maintain nutritional balance. Errors in supplementation can lead to overdosing. In addition, the inclusion of plant ingredients is controversial for cats, which are obligate carnivores.

The Frankenprey method follows a fixed scheme and largely avoids additives. This brings it closer to the natural diet of wild felines. However, the strict adherence to specific ratios can be challenging and requires a wide variety of animal components. The low degree of flexibility may be a disadvantage for cats with health issues or special requirements.



Scientific Studies and Expert Opinions on Raw Feeding

Scientific research on raw feeding in cats is still limited. Some studies indicate an increased risk of bacterial contamination in commercially produced and home-prepared raw diets. These may contain bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *Listeria*, and *E. coli*. Such pathogens can pose risks to both cats and humans.

Other research suggests that raw feeding can influence the gut microbiome and alter stool consistency. There are also case reports of nutrient imbalances in home-prepared raw diets, such as insufficient amounts of organs or incorrect calcium-to-phosphorus ratios.

Currently, there is no scientific evidence that raw diets provide better nutrient coverage than high-quality cooked or commercially produced complete foods. Veterinary organizations such as the American Veterinary Medical Association explicitly advise against feeding raw or inadequately heated animal proteins due to potential health risks. The FDA and CDC also warn about possible infections associated with handling raw pet food.

Veterinarians and nutrition experts generally do not recommend raw diets, as safe implementation is demanding and requires precise nutrient calculation. Nonetheless, there are veterinarians and other experts who consider raw feeding potentially beneficial when executed correctly. Reported advantages include

improved digestion, a shinier coat, or positive effects on certain health conditions. These assessments, however, apply exclusively to carefully formulated and hygienically prepared raw diets.

One of the best-known proponents of raw feeding is Dr. Ian Billinghurst, who developed the B.A.R.F. feeding model. Nevertheless, whenever health risks or uncertainties arise, a veterinarian should be consulted to help identify potential errors in the feeding approach.



Additional Important Aspects of Raw Feeding

Food safety plays a central role in raw feeding. Raw meat can contain pathogens such as Salmonella, Listeria, E. coli, or Campylobacter. For this reason, careful handling is necessary to minimize risks for both humans and animals. This includes thorough handwashing before and after preparation, cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces and utensils that come into contact with raw meat, and storing raw meat separately from other foods.

Thawing should take place in the refrigerator or, if necessary, in the microwave. Proper storage in the freezer is also essential to prevent harmful bacteria from multiplying. If there are concerns about hygiene or if there are health-related risks, a veterinarian should be consulted.

Sourcing appropriate ingredients can be done through various channels, including supermarkets, butcher shops, farmers' markets, online vendors, or specialized raw-feeding cooperatives. It is advisable to use meat intended for human consumption and to pay attention to product quality. Some owners prefer pasture-raised or organic meat, although this is not strictly required. More important is freshness and proper temperature control. Storage and transport conditions provided by suppliers play a significant role.

The individual needs of the cat must always be considered in raw feeding. Kittens require higher amounts of protein, calcium, and phosphorus due to growth. Older cats often benefit from easily digestible, high-quality meat. Cats with pre-existing conditions such as kidney disease, diabetes, allergies, or inflammatory bowel disease may have special dietary requirements. In such cases, raw feeding should be discussed with a veterinarian.

Adjusting a raw diet to specific health conditions requires expertise to avoid placing additional strain on the animal. Activity level also influences energy needs. For cats with food intolerances, raw feeding can offer advantages because the ingredients can be selected and controlled precisely. However, any health changes should always be evaluated by a veterinarian.



Conclusion and Recommendations

B.A.R.F. and the Frankenprey method are alternative feeding approaches designed to provide domestic cats with a raw, species-appropriate diet. Both methods draw inspiration from the natural prey of wild felines, yet they differ significantly in structure and flexibility. While B.A.R.F. relies on a variable combination of meat, organs, bones, and optional plant-based ingredients—and allows the use of supplements—the Frankenprey method follows a fixed scheme with clearly defined proportions and largely excludes additives.

Both approaches may offer potential benefits, such as improved digestion or good dental health, but they also involve risks when not implemented correctly. These risks include bacterial contamination or nutrient imbalances. If health concerns or uncertainties arise, a veterinarian should be consulted.

The scientific community emphasizes that raw feeding requires special attention to hygiene and nutrient formulation. Bacterial risks are higher than with cooked or commercially processed foods, and errors in nutrient composition can have serious consequences for a cat's health. High-quality commercial cat foods provide complete and balanced nutrition and are a safe, practical option for many owners.

For those who nevertheless choose raw feeding, thorough education is essential.

Ideally, owners should consult a veterinarian or a specialized pet nutritionist, especially when feeding kittens, older cats, or animals with preexisting conditions. Careful planning of a raw diet is crucial to ensure that all nutritional needs are met throughout the different life stages of the cat.

This includes considering the individual requirements of each cat. The decision for or against raw feeding should always be based on a realistic assessment of its advantages and potential risks.

Above all, the well-being of the cat must remain the central priority.



For your notes

For your notes

